



WESTERN RECORDER

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Poll: Americans split on creation and evolution

Princeton, N.J. (RNS)—A Gallup Poll suggests that Americans are divided over how the world was created—either through evolution or at the hand of God.

But either way, they appear skeptical that it happened exactly as described in the book of Genesis.

The poll found that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution remains controversial among Americans. About one-third say it is supported by evidence, one-third see it as bunk and one-third don't know enough to judge.

A plurality of Americans—45 percent—say God created man in his present form, while 38 percent say man developed over time as God guided the process. Just 13 percent said God had no role in the process.

Yet a smaller percentage, 34 percent, said the Bible is the actual Word of God and should be read literally. Pollsters said that discrepancy suggests that Americans believe man was created as-is, but not because the Bible says so.

Breaking down the numbers, Gallup officials said about one-quarter of Americans are "biblical literalists" who believe man was created 10,000 years ago in his present form. They tend to be women, conservatives, Republicans and at least weekly.

A slightly smaller number—one in five Americans—believe man was created in his present form 10,000 years ago, but not because they read the Bible literally. Just 9 percent of the country read the Bible literally but are open to the theory of evolution.

The largest group—46 percent—do not read the Bible literally and believe humans might have evolved over time. This group tends to be male, urban, more educated, Catholic and seldom or never attend church.

"It is not surprising to find that the biblical literalists who believe that God created humans 10,000 years ago tend to be more religious and Protestant," said Frank Newport, Gallup's editor in chief. "Given the recent emphasis on the importance of religion in the Nov. 2 presidential election, it is of interest to note that this 'true believer' group tends to be more Republican than (most Americans)."

India's fast track

'Zippies' want it all, lack spiritual base, Christians say

By Erich Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

Bangalore, India—While his American corporate client sleeps many time zones away, Allen works 12, 14, sometimes 16 hours a day. Whatever it takes to get the job done—on time and on target.

"He gives me work in the evening" via computer, says Allen, one of the tens of thousands of digital globetrotters in Bangalore, India's 24/7 capital of information technology. "When he comes back in the morning it will be done, for a very low cost and with very high quality."

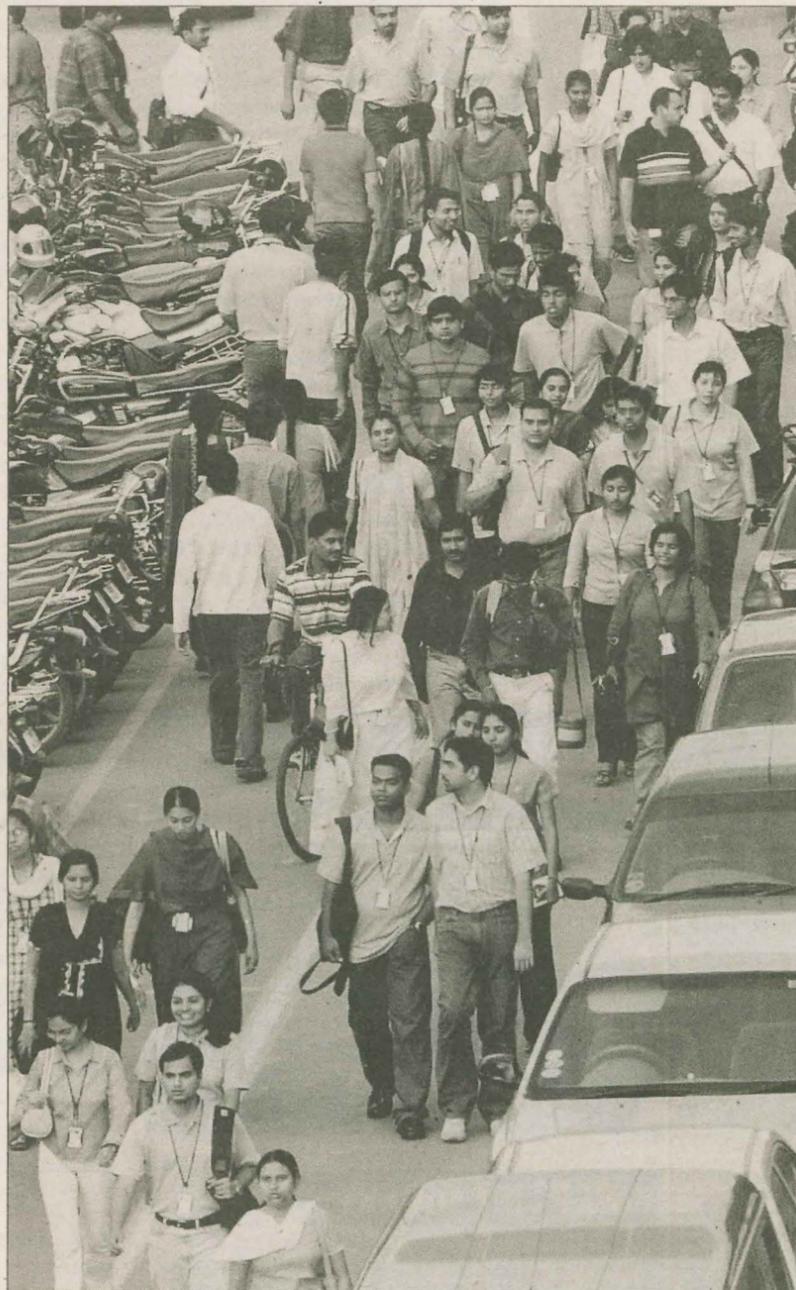
Allen, a 20-something college grad, works for an IT company in Bangalore's "Electronic City," a mile-long stretch in the sprawling south Indian metropolis. There you can find sleek office complexes housing offices for Oracle, Wipro, Intel, IBM, Dell and Hewlett-Packard.

Allen's brother, Finney, also a college grad, works on the most visually impressive IT "campus" in town: Infosys. Spread over 260 beautifully manicured acres, it reportedly trails only Microsoft's U.S. headquarters in sheer size.

The pristine complex features work stations for 10,000 employees—plus a gym, recreation center, resort-style pool, palm trees, ponds, restaurants, stores and an amphitheater for concerts.

"People who work here don't want to leave," says one proud staffer.

□ See India's fast-paced ... *Page 6*



ELECTRONIC CITY Workers in Bangalore, India, change shifts at Infosys, the world's second largest technology campus, behind Microsoft's headquarters. More than 10,000 people work in two shifts on the Infosys campus, which involves 30 buildings on an estimated 260 acres. Technology gains are bringing wealth to young Indians, but spiritually, many are still seeking, local Christians say. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)



Missions author urges wake-up call for churches

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Louisville—Mission-minded Christians must send a wake-up call to their fellow believers and help eradicate one of two belief systems that compete in many churches, according to author and missions specialist Nate Adams.

Adams, vice president for mission mobilization for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, said that in many congregations, the belief that "the church is for the world" must compete with the selfish view that "the church is for me."

"You have to awaken the people who think, 'The church is only for me,'" Adams told a workshop audience at this year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Author of "The Acts 1:8 Challenge," Adams said the classic film, "The Wizard of Oz," illustrates what happens to many Christians and many churches.

To reach the Emerald City, Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion are instructed to stay on the Yellow Brick Road, Adams noted.

Trouble occurs when they leave the road and enter a poppy field that makes them all fall asleep.

"Then the Tin Man is so sad, he begins to cry and rusts in place," he said.

"The object (of the Wicked Witch) was for them to fall asleep," Adams said. "And when they wake up, they're sorry they ever left the road."

□ See Missions author ... *Page 3*



NAMB SPEAKER North American Mission Board Vice President Nate Adams: "You have to awaken the people who think, 'The church is only for me.'"

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, December 1

IMB workers reach 131 new people groups

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

Oklahoma City (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas partners began making inroads this past year among 131 people groups that previously had little or no access to the gospel, International Mission Board trustees were told during a Nov. 16-17 meeting in Oklahoma City.

The trustees also heard a report of more than 600,000 overseas baptisms, adopted a \$283.1 million budget for 2005 and pledged \$88,396 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

IMB missionaries and international Baptist partners engaged 163 people groups for the first time during 2003, said Gordon Fort, the board's vice president for overseas operations. Of those, 131 groups—representing 152 million people—previously had virtually no access to the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

More than 600,000 baptized

IMB workers also reported that 607,132 believers were baptized, a net increase of 97,973 (19.2 percent) over the previous year.

The total number of congregations worldwide reached 99,495, a net increase of 15,480 (18.4 percent)

over the previous year.

In other categories of the annual report:

■ Total outreach groups grew to 50,297, a net increase of 3,920 (8.5 percent) over the previous year.

■ Overseas church membership climbed 498,886 (7.2 percent) to a total of 7,451,242.

■ Bible teaching enrollment increased by 234,318 (6.3 percent) to 3,942,886.

■ New believers in discipleship training reached 490,046, an increase of 66,760 (15.8 percent).

■ Church members in discipleship training grew by 156,208 (17.7 percent) to 1,037,985.

"These numbers provide a snapshot of the amazing way God is moving lost people all over the world to faith in Jesus Christ," Fort said. "The number of new churches illustrates the serious efforts of our missionaries and Baptist partners to conserve these new believers and extend the Kingdom like glowing candles in the midst of vast spiritual darkness."

Trustee chairman Tom Hatley of Rogers, Ark., challenged board members to adopt a "whatever it takes" attitude toward sending the number of missionaries needed to complete the Great Commission task.

After his election in May, Hatley asked the board's overseas leadership to estimate how many new missionaries would be required to take the gospel to the largest people groups that have yet to hear it. In a three-hour, closed-door dialogue Nov. 16, the board's 11 regional leaders delivered a preliminary report to trustees.

Southern Baptists need to increase dramatically the number of missionaries and funding for international missions—perhaps by as much as 60 percent, Hatley said.

"Working with our Great Commission Christian partners, we can

reach all people groups numbering more than 100,000 with the gospel, and we can do it in years, not decades," Hatley said. "God has provided the resources, the technology and the ability to travel. We are at a point of opportunity never before seen.

"We need to let our brothers and sisters know the size of the task that remains and that it can be achieved in the next few years," Hatley said. "This is not a goal; it is a mandate given to us by our Lord."

IMB adopts \$283 million budget

The trustees also adopted a 2005 budget of \$283.1 million, an increase of \$7.1 million over the total budget for 2004. The revenue plan anticipates receiving \$99.6 million through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program and \$150 million from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The spending plan allocates \$243.8 million to overseas operations, an increase of more than \$20.3 million (9.1 percent) over 2004. The \$37.7 million allocated to stateside administration and promotion is an increase of \$2.2 million over 2004 but is a decrease as a percentage of the total budget (from 13.7 percent to 13.3 percent).

The overseas portion of the budget includes \$47 million dedicated to church-planting movements. The budget also includes \$1.5 million for support of "global personnel," a new category that covers missionaries temporarily assigned to stateside tasks, such as "missions personalizers" who help churches understand the missions challenge and opportunity they face.

The national goal for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is \$150 million—all of which will be used to send missionaries and support their ministries. The IMB relies on the Lottie Moon offering for 51 percent of its annual income.

Ministers' widows undergird Baptist work with prayer

Dallas (BP)—GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention has been providing a way for Southern Baptists to help widows in need for more than 20 years and, in return, many of those widows are giving back through prayer.

GuideStone's Adopt An Annuitant ministry serves as a channel through which Southern Baptists can provide financial support for retired ministers and widows in need.

"About two-thirds of the people who are helped through the Adopt An Annuitant ministry are widows," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins noted. "Many of these widows worked alongside their husbands for decades, teaching Sunday school and supporting their husbands' ministries. Now they face the future with uncertainty because of financial concerns.

"We regularly receive letters from Adopt An Annuitant recipients telling us how they are blessed by this ministry and how the monthly support allows them to continue to do God's work."

Merle Butler of Cayce, S.C., recently wrote, "Because of God using His people to help provide for me, I have been able to stay in my home and reach out to others. I know I have a responsibility to help those less fortunate than me. I try to devote my life to helping others."

Hawkins noted that "most of the widows in our Adopt An Annuitant ministry also participate in GuideStone's Widows' Might prayer ministry. The objective of the ministry is to provide prayer support for the mission of Southern Baptists around the world."

Widows who participate in the Widows' Might prayer ministry are asked to set aside time daily to pray for specific needs related to Southern Baptists. Each quarter, the widows receive a list of prayer requests from Southern Baptist organizations.

Churches can assist widows in need by making a gift to the Adopt An Annuitant ministry. "We depend greatly on the churches, Sunday school classes and individuals who give unselfishly to the ministry," Hawkins said. "Without the generosity of Southern Baptists, many of these widows would be unable to meet the expenses of daily living."

The names of any widow of a Southern Baptist minister or denominational employee who may meet the guidelines of the Adopt An Annuitant program can be referred to the ministry. The guidelines and a referral form are available on GuideStone's Web site at www.GuideStone.org.

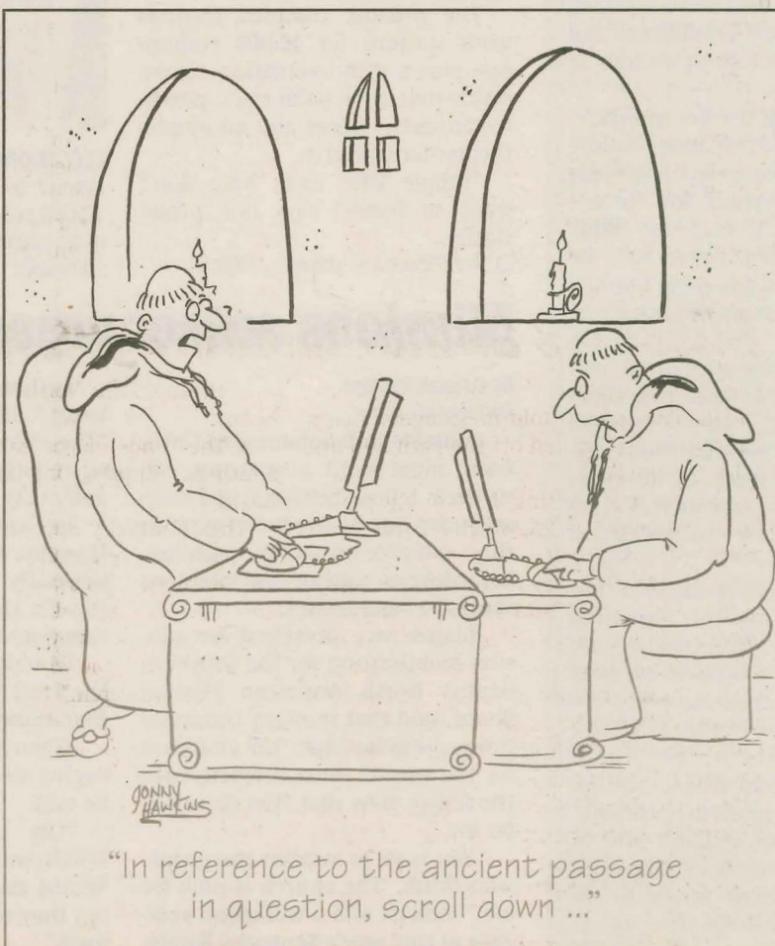
"WHATEVER IT TAKES"
IMB trustee chairman Tom Hatley of Rogers, Ark., challenged board members to adopt a "whatever it takes" attitude toward sending the number of missionaries needed to fulfill the Great Commission. (IMB photo by Bill Bangham)



BAPTIST DIGEST

BGCT, Houston school reach agreement. Houston Baptist University and the Baptist General Convention of Texas have agreed to a "memorandum of understanding" that maintains their longstanding relationship but reduces funding for the school. Keith Bruce, coordinator of institutional ministries for the BGCT, said the agreement "clarifies the implications of the school's fraternal relationship with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention," a conservative convention that broke away from the BGCT. While the school can maintain its ties to the conservative group, it must "give priority" to ministries of the BGCT, the memorandum says. In response, the BGCT will release about \$200,000 in escrowed funds, including funds designated for minority scholarships and to support the school's Baptist student ministry. An additional \$600,000 grant will be withheld indefinitely.

Mercer's Godsey announces retirement. Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., announced he will retire in 18 months. Trustees expect to start the search for his successor as early as spring. Godsey, 68, revealed his plans to step down June 30, 2006. President of Mercer since 1979, he went to work for the university in 1977 as executive vice president and dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Previously he was vice president and dean of the college at Averett College in Danville, Va. The outspoken Godsey often attracted controversy in Baptist life. His 1996 book, "When We Talk About God, Let's Be Honest," prompted charges of heresy from some Christian critics and strong defense from Godsey supporters.



KBC president names chairmen for committees

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist Convention President-Hershael York has appointed chairmen to lead 16 standing committees of the state convention and the KBC Mission Board for the coming year.

York, who was elected KBC president last month, is pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort. He also is professor and associate dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

The committee chairs, which include 13 pastors and three laypeople, also include 15 men and one woman.

Those appointed to chair KBC committees are:

Committee on Arrangements: Bob Lowery, pastor of First Baptist Church, Central City

Committee on Committees: Peggy Snowden, member of Central Baptist Church, Winchester.

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws: Darren Gaddis, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Corbin.

Committee on Credentials: Kent Workman, pastor of New Work Fellowship Baptist Church, Crofton.

Committee on Nominations: Ronny Raines, pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

Committee on Order of Business: Skip Alexander, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church.

Committee on Public Affairs: Chip Hutcheson, member of Southside Baptist Church, Princeton.

Committee on Resolutions: Charles Barnes, member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville.

Those named to chair Mission Board committees are:

Administrative Committee: Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.

Agencies & Institutions Committee: Joe Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, Russell Springs.

Business & Finance Committee: Mark Galloway, pastor of Zion Baptist Church, Henderson.

Church Development & Evangelism Committee: Randy Johnson, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church.

Leadership Development Committee: Kevin McCallon, pastor of First Baptist Church, Paducah.

Missions Growth Committee: Floyd Paris, pastor of Unity Baptist Church, Ashland.

Nominating Committee: Steve Hussung, pastor of Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

Resource Development & Communications Committee: Shane Nickell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Barbourville.

KBC leaders expand staff reorganization

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Staff reorganization efforts continued last week as the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff mobilizes for "Kentucky Baptists Connect."

Members of the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee approved recommendations involving 10 staff positions during their Nov. 29 meeting.

Among the proposals, one new staff member was elected, people to fill two department-level positions were approved for recommendation to the full KBC Mission Board next week and job description changes were approved for seven positions.

Lynch elected strategist

Rodney Lynch, a former minister of education, youth and administration in several Kentucky Baptist churches, was elected discipleship and assimilation strategist for the KBC's church development and evangelism team.

Team leader Dan Garland said Lynch is "a self-starter" who is "enthusiastic about his work."

Noting that Lynch will be responsible for helping church leaders "implement effective strategies for assimilation (of new members), adult/general discipleship and deacon ministry," he added, "We're seeking to discover what churches are doing well and what is working. This is part of what Rodney will bring to the table."

Lynch told committee members, "I think churches in today's society are really struggling with how to

close that back door. That's where discipleship and new member assimilation are a big key in the church.

"God has been doing a unique, wonderful work in my life in recent years," he added. "I think God has grown me to the point where I believe this opportunity is where I can best use my abilities."

Lynch, a graduate of Georgetown College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is former pastor of education/administration at Rich Pond Baptist Church in Bowling Green. He also has served at Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, First Baptist Church of Danville and Cynthiana Baptist Church as well as a church in South Carolina.

Committee recommendations to the full board, which meets Dec. 13-14, include Glen Cummins as a church development strategist and Larry Baker as new work/associational missions department director.

Cummins, associate pastor for education at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, would succeed French Harmon as church development strategist for the state's north central region. Harmon was approved as church development and evangelism associate team leader in the areas of stewardship, networking and coordinating the work of the regional strategists.

Baker is director of missions for Christian County Baptist Association in Hopkinsville. In his new role, he would assume many of the responsibilities held by Tony Hough, who is retiring as extension-minis-



Lynch

Miller resigns Sunday school associate position

Louisville—Doug Miller, an associate in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's adult Sunday school/discipleship group, resigned effective Nov. 30.

Miller, who has served on the KBC staff since 2000, said he plans to seek a pastorate.

"I am excited about what God is holding for my future," he noted. "My first call was to be a pastor and I'm looking forward to going back

to that."

During his time on the KBC staff, Miller worked primarily in the areas of Sunday school and young adult ministry.

Since the KBC Mission Board staff reorganization last year, "I've been primarily doing research, working with demographics for churches and church-type projects," he added.

Expressing appreciation for Miller's "service to Kentucky Baptists,"

tries department director.

In addition to Harmon's election, committee members promoted two group directors to associate team leader positions on the church development and evangelism team.

Keith Inman, director of the collegiate/young adult ministry group, will serve as associate team leader in that area. Darryl Wilson, director of the adult Sunday school/discipleship group, was elected associate team leader of that group.

The new structure expands the church development and evangelism team's leadership positions from one associate team leader to three. All three will report to team leader Dan Garland.

"What we're trying to do is streamline the organization," Garland said. "Part of my philosophy and style is to put people where they have passion and expertise."

In other action, committee members approved expanded job descriptions in the missions growth team for mountain missions director David Aker, partnership missions department director Ross Bauscher and disaster relief associate Larry Koch.

Randy Jones, who was elected missions growth team leader last month, noted that the changes will help facilitate "new and innovative ministries" as the team pursues "Kentucky Baptists Connect" goals.

Committee members also expanded the job description for Cindy Pelphrey, a part-time campus minister serving five campuses in the Owensboro area. In addition to her current responsibilities, she will coordinate the KBC's annual International Students Conference and supervise a part-time intern.

Dan Garland, leader of the KBC's church development and evangelism team, said, "We hope Doug's experience and time at the KBC will help him better serve Kentucky Baptists on the local church level."

Miller is a graduate of Campbellsville University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He previously was minister of discipleship and evangelism at First Baptist Church of Fairdale.

Missions author encourages wake-up call for churches

Continued from page 1

Likewise, Adams told messengers, many churches have "gotten off the path and are asleep in the field."

As a guide for getting "back on the path," Adams offered Acts 1:8, which records Jesus' last words on earth.

In it, He promises followers the power of the Holy Spirit and instructs them to witness about Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and "to the ends of the earth."

Adams noted that many Baptist churches already are structured to fulfill this "Great Commission" through local, state and Southern Baptist channels:

■ "Jerusalem," where they currently live, through Baptist associations and churches.

■ "Judea," the larger geographic region where they live, through state Baptist conventions.

■ "Samaria," nearby regions and territo-

ries, through the North American Mission Board.

■ The "ends of the earth" through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

The "Kentucky Baptists Connect" effort launched at the annual meeting will focus on Kentucky's Jerusalems and Judea, Adams said, but added, "Jerusalem missions is not the same as evangelism. You should be reaching people who will probably never attend your church."

Church starts and language ministries are a few examples of Jerusalem missions.

"Your task is much greater than how many people you can physically welcome into your churches," he said. "Your task is the world."

Adams said that while conducting research at NAMB, he found many Christians express their intent "to do God's mission in

my own strength."

"The presence and power of the Holy Spirit are essential in daily living and the church's mission," he said.

To minister effectively, Adams said, believers first receive the Holy Spirit and then "radiate" the gospel, individually and through the church, to everyone on earth.

Adams offered the illustration of a frustrated man operating a leaf blower on a windy day. Working in a vain attempt to corral leaves in one corner of the yard, Adams said the man learned, "You have to work with the wind."

By using the power of the Holy Spirit, Adams said, believers can allow God to use them to accomplish great things for His glory. "Most churches don't see themselves as a work of worldwide influence," Adams said. "But that is how God designed every New Testament church."

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*Earnestly contend for
the faith which was once
for all delivered to the
saints.—Jude 3*

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No 'orchestrated plan'

I am amazed that my comments at the Kentucky Baptist Convention caused such a stir. The editor maintains his sadness "that the debate included accusations against BWA that highlighted only one side of a complex issue."

Could it be the reason there was no substantive defense of Baptist World Alliance at the microphone was simply because the BWA positions are indefensible? Surely those who asked for this study recognized the possibility that these questions would be raised. All the facts I shared can be substantiated by Baptist Press articles.

I personally was offended that a letter writer in the Nov. 23 paper makes accusation against me, even if I am unnamed in his letter. He makes mention of my having been in the state for only four weeks, as did I in lighthearted manner while addressing the convention. As I understand Baptist polity I am now as much a Kentucky Baptist as he or anyone else who's a member of a participating church in our state convention. His implication is that the convention would have been better served if those with longer tenures as Kentucky Baptists had been able to guide the discussion.

He further states my words were "part of an orchestrated plan set by those who have takeover in mind." I know of no "orchestrated plan" and personally have no intention of "takeover." Yet I fail to understand why we should spend more

of the Lord's money to study something previously studied for seven years by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. With the historic Baptist principle concerning the autonomy of the local church, let each church exercise its ability to support the BWA through its own budget.



Call me proud to be a Kentucky Baptist and grateful to God for freedom to speak my convictions at our wonderful annual meeting.

Tom James
Bowling Green

Protect priesthood

During our Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, some proposed we appoint a committee to evaluate the KBC's relationship with the Baptist World Alliance. As you know, the proposal was defeated.

I confess I was very troubled by some of the reasoning used to argue against the proposal. One messenger argued it would be a waste of the KBC's resources to study the issue since the Southern Baptist Convention has already studied it and reached a conclusion. I am very concerned that we as a state convention may start deferring our decision-making power to the SBC.

The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is perhaps our most cherished Baptist distinctive. It means that every believer is able to approach God directly through our High Priest, Jesus. No earthly authority has the right to tell us what we must or must not believe,

for each one of us has the right and responsibility to study and interpret God's Word and seek the Spirit's leading for himself or herself. The priesthood of the believer, by extension, provides the theological basis for other Baptist principles such as soul competency and the autonomy of the local church.

If we choose not to study and pray over any particular issue simply because the SBC leadership already has, are we not undercutting our commitment to the priesthood of the believer? Are we saying that we personally no longer need to seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit since we need only take our cues from those "higher up" in Baptist life? Is the priesthood of the SBC leadership the only priesthood that really matters?

It's one thing to argue for the inerrancy of Scripture. It's quite another to insist that the SBC leadership's interpretation of Scripture is inerrant. My dear family, do you remember when we were Baptists?

Kevin Slemp
Berea

Peace torn asunder?

With the election of Hershael York as president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will the peace that has prevailed among Kentucky Baptists for decades be torn asunder? York hardly received a mandate, winning by only 59 votes out of a total of 1,313.

While the Southern Baptist Convention and numerous state conventions have squandered their Baptist birthright, for the last 25 years Kentucky Baptists have, for the most part, set an example of cooperation that has led to unprecedented Kingdom building. Is all of that gone forever with a new regime that uses "inerrancy" as the acid test of faithfulness to the Baptist cause?

William E. and Charlotte R. Ellis
Richmond

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Submit by mail to Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Ministry across Kentucky

I recently had the privilege of representing Kentucky Baptists in several unique ministry locations. Let me share with you just a little about each:

Second Baptist Church of Princeton. Pastor Darell Eldridge invited me to speak for the church's 75th anniversary celebration. A church quartet provided inspirational music and the church family enjoyed a wonderful meal and time of fellowship.

Darell is a native of Letcher County, where I served for 10 years, so we enjoyed conversation about mutual acquaintances. Please pray for Darell in his third struggle with cancer.

Hartford Baptist Church. Pastor Ed Mitchell called requesting a revival speaker for a Sunday evening. His wife, Vickie, directed the music. It was a privilege to meet the Mitchells (including two delightful daughters) and to share worship with the church family.

First Baptist Church of Fairdale. In the wake of our recent Kentucky

Baptist Convention annual meeting, Pastor Josh Powell invited me to speak to that congregation about the KBC's ministries. Josh and his wife, Allison, are from wonderful ministering families in South Carolina. Josh represents a large group of young ministers who are being used by God for Kingdom advance.

Pathway Baptist Church of Beaver Dam. Raymond Ward, a well-known retired pastor/musician and interim minister, is being used of God to help this congregation find new direction as a KBC congregation. It was a privilege to worship in the church's beautiful facilities. Please pray for the church as it seeks God's direction and responds to ministry opportunities.

Greater Good Hope Baptist Church of Louisville. On a recent Sunday afternoon, I participated in the first anniversary celebration of R.L. Jordan as pastor. The service recognized the challenges and victories of the first year and provided

wonderful affirmation for Jordan and his wife.

Logan/Todd Association. It was a distinct honor to speak during the organizational meeting of the Logan/Todd Baptist Association. The former Bethel and Logan associations had been led of God to combine to form one association. Director of Missions Rob Johnson and moderators Robert Tarrance, pastor of Green Ridge Baptist Church, and Ron Wells, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Russellville, were instrumental in this process.

It was a privilege to represent Kentucky Baptists on this significant occasion. This new vision represents good stewardship for churches, associations and the KBC as we avoid duplications.

In a divided world and nation, it is gratifying to see unity in Christ. It is a witness to divided families, churches, communities, associations and conventions that barriers can be overcome and unity in Christ experienced.

Please join me in praying for unity in Christ among all Kentucky Baptists!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

New year offers fresh opportunity for stewardship

By Doug Strader

As the holiday season approaches, the beginning of a new year is just a few weeks away. Our record for the year of 2004 is almost complete.

We cannot change anything about this past year, but we can do something about 2005. In Philippians 3:13-14, the Apostle Paul wrote, "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

What a difference it would make in our lives if we could live by Paul's admonition to the Philippian Christians.

When most Christians think about stewardship, they think of money—and that is part of our stewardship responsibility. But we are to be stewards of all our lives. Included in that responsibility is our time, talents, possessions and spiritual gifts.

Most of us can find room for improvement in one or more of these areas of life. Maybe we have been faithful in giving our tithes and offerings to the Lord through the church, but we have been lax in giving our time and using our talents and spiritual gifts for Him. If you are serious about your faithfulness in all areas of stewardship responsibility, the beginning of a new year is an ideal time to renew that commitment.

Paul began by forgetting the past. That is the place for us to begin also. It is not always easy to forget the past, but it is an essential part of our growing commitment of being faithful stewards. If we have asked God to forgive us, according to the Bible He forgave us. (1 John 1:9).

The next step is to forgive ourselves. Then move forward. The word Paul used was "straining." It would not be easy; it would take effort and some "stick-to-it-ness." But that was his goal; he had something to encourage him to go forward.

If we will commit our life to God and His will for us to be faithful stewards, and if we will strain to meet the goal, we can do it. We can be faithful stewards in 2005 if we begin now to be faithful.

Doug Strader, retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department, is pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville

Take positive steps to battle effects of holiday depression

Q: I am very depressed and it seems like it might have something to do with the holidays. How do I get out of a very deep depression? I've been through both divorce and a loved one's death recently. I also worry that I'm not going to have enough money to get everyone the Christmas presents I would like to buy for them. I understand there is medicine that helps someone facing depression, but I also hear that I need to seek counseling. Which ingredient should I take?

Consider these ingredients to holiday-related mental health:

SINGLES

Don't create financial reasons to be depressed. The commercial "full court

press" to spend, spend, spend in order to be happy is wrong, wrong, wrong. One source of depression often involves the incredible debts we are ringing up, both individually and as a society. As Mark Twain once said, "It used to be a virtue to save money. Now it's a virtue to spend." Avoid financial temptations of the season. Shopping on a budget is a good first step.

Treat major depression with professional help. The subject of depression is much bigger than which season of the year it is. Major depression can make life unmanageable, can go for months without relief and calls for professional help.

Professional help might include medication. A physician trained in medicines to help supplement chemicals missing in the brain should be considered. Research shows that one part of the brain responds best to medication, while another part of the brain responds best to talk therapy. The best approach often is a combination of both.

Professional help might include counseling. Approximately 50 percent of people who experience a first occurrence of clinical depression do so as a result of a traumatic event. 20 percent of a second occurrence comes from trauma, and only 10 percent of a third. This is why treating depression with cognitive therapy is so important: Most depression is a virus of negative thinking. Negative thinking patterns are best treated with cognitive therapy. We literally create "grooves" in our brains that lead us down paths of negativity. New pathways in the brain need to be created. Find someone skilled in breaking negative thinking patterns to help you start developing positive ones. When you "shop" for therapists who treat depression, make sure you work with someone familiar with cognitive distortions.

Focus on others through community. During the holidays, remember the reason for the season. Do things that make this time of year meaningful to you, no matter what the culture says. The culture can be brutal to single people with all the emphasis to "be with the one you love." Surround yourself with loving people. Look for Christ-centered single adult groups. Some churches provide opportunities to develop community during the "family-oriented" times of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Valentine's Day.

Focus on others through service. The fulfillment you get when the focus is off your own problems and toward helping those who are less fortunate is powerful. Seek opportunities to serve those who are hurting. Reaching out to others will help you cultivate loving thoughts, and will lead you more toward Christ and less toward materialism.

Avoid alcohol. Whatever you do, stay away from alcohol. It is marketed as a stimulant, but in nearly every effect it has on the human mind and body, is a depressant. It will only make the problem worse.

Go for a walk. Pay attention to the weather. Whenever there is a sunny day, don't waste it by staying indoors. Go for a walk. See the beauty of God's creation and soak it up.

Mediate on God's Word. Fill your mind with positive thoughts from Scripture. "And the peace of God, that passes all understanding, will guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).—James Stillwell

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Diverse leadership strengthens ministry

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," Galatians 3:28 declares.

One way many of us learned that concept as youngsters was through the chorus, "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

Seeking to share the gospel with all people, regardless of race, gender or ethnic background is a clear goal of Kentucky Baptists. "Kentucky Baptists Connect" is committed to "connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

One practical challenge involves including individuals from diverse backgrounds in Kentucky Baptist Convention leadership roles. While the majority of adults in most churches are female and the vast majority of Kentucky Baptists are laity, most convention leaders are male ministers. Likewise, African-Americans, Hispanics and other groups the KBC is seeking to reach are seldom represented in KBC leadership posts.

As an example, KBC President Hershael York's recent appointments of 16 KBC and Mission Board committee chairs are exclusively Anglo. Among that group, 15 are male and 13 are pastors. That's not to single out York's appointments as an exception, however. Those numbers are fairly representative of other presidential appointments in recent years.

Immediate past president Eugene Siler, himself a layman, included four lay members among his 16 appointments. While the 12 ministers he appointed included a director of missions, an associate pastor and a minister of education, all 16 chairs also were Anglo. His appointments, like York's, included 15 males.

The KBC's 176-member Mission Board includes 133 ministers and 43 laypeople—a ratio of more than 3-to-1. Among the board members are 21 females, three His-

panics and two African-Americans.

Other boards in KBC life face similar challenges. The Western Recorder's 12-member board of directors, for example, is all Anglo and includes 11 males. On the positive side of inclusive involvement, our board includes five lay members and a female vice chairman.

Still, there is a long way to go for Kentucky Baptist leadership to better reflect the various groups both in our commonwealth and congregations. Recent examples of positive involvement among Kentucky Baptists and others include:

■ St. Matthews Baptist Church of Louisville and Saloma Baptist Church of Campbellsville recently joined the predominantly African-American General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. Saloma Pastor John Chowning said his congregation's action was designed to show it is serious about racial and ethnic reconciliation.

■ Robert Reccord, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, appointed a 15-member task force of Hispanic Baptist leaders to help Southern Baptists reach Hispanics with the gospel.

■ Several state conventions reflected diversity in their officer elections this fall. The Baptist General Convention of Texas elected its first Hispanic president. Among firsts for three other state conventions, the Mississippi Baptist Convention elected a Hispanic vice president, the Baptist General Association of Virginia elected an African-American vice president and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma elected a female vice president.

As our state convention pursues "Kentucky Baptists Connect," we must make deliberate choices about leadership opportunities among the people we are seeking to serve. That is among the ways Kentucky Baptists can help spread "good news of great joy which shall be for all people."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Off-site centers offer ministry options

Youth workers often are looking for the "next big thing"—trying to see what someone else is doing and how we can adapt that to our situation.

One strategy that frequently is opening off-site ministry centers. Creative names like One Way, Something Different and Sozo dot the landscape of Kentucky communities as churches seek to reach teenagers for Christ. The reasons for opening off-site centers are as varied as the churches that sponsor them.

Steve Coleman, minister of education and students at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville, opened Something Different in May. His reasoning: "Our church went to an off-site storefront to give more flexibility for ministering to teens and college students in Hopkinsville."

"The building has opened up so many opportunities of ministry that were not available in the traditional church building," he added. "We have the building open now six days a week for ministry."

Ralph Neal, pastor of Shawnee Run Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, is former minister of students and recreation at First Baptist Church of Barbourville and director of One Way. "The church had a vision to reach the students that were cruising the square in Barbourville,"

he explained. One Way offered Saturday night concerts, an after-school program, a computer lab and Wednesday night worship.

"In the three years we were open, 20 students accepted Christ," Neal said, "but most of them were through the after-school program. Our initial intent was the weekends, reaching the cruisers, but the after-school program took off."

The churches supported the effort 100 percent, providing financial resources as well as countless volunteers to staff the ministry. One Way had current and retired teachers who volunteered to help with tutoring at the after-school program. "The key is volunteers," Neal noted. "Without volunteers it wouldn't be possible."

Coleman said the main reason to go off-site is "to reach people where people are. Many times they will not come to the church but they will go to a place that is different and non-threatening."

"Your church really has to be ready to try new things," Neal pointed out, "things that would even take you out of your comfort zone."

What can youth workers learn from these experiences?

You need one church to be the catalyst. Even though it is imperative to work in cooperation with oth-

er churches in the community, one church must champion the cause. It provide accountability, a place to recruit volunteers and a vehicle to channel converts.

God's plan may be bigger or different than your vision. While your idea might be Saturday night worship, a coffeehouse or a bigger worship space for your Wednesday youth meeting, God might want you to provide tutoring or reach college students.

Bridging the gap between students who come to the off-site location and those involved in the life of the church as a whole can be tough. If the non-traditional setting is what attracted youth, great care must be taken in incorporating them into the tradition of a local church.

Students from surrounding churches might attend our concerts, special events or mid-week service. Don't let such events become a way of "stealing sheep." Always funnel church kids back to their church. There are enough unsaved youth out there for all of us to fill our churches.

A dichotomy always exists between being grounded in tradition and stretching outside the box. Some people might say you are too out there for their students, while others will push you to stay on the cutting edge.

Joe Ball, former minister of education and youth at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, was elected last month as the Kentucky Baptist Convention's youth strategist

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

India's fast-paced 'Zippies' want it all, lack knowledge of Christ

Continued from page 1

But when each shift ends, long convoys of company shuttle buses wait to take throngs of educated, motivated workers home, making room for the next shift.

These are the "Zippies."

What's a Zippy? "A young city or suburban resident, between 15 and 25 years of age, with a zip in the stride," explains Outlook, an Indian magazine.

They are the first generation of Indians to benefit from modern economic globalization. Allen and Finney make more money fresh out of school than their well-educated father ever dreamed of making. But they still command only a tenth of comparative American salaries.

Is it any wonder U.S. companies outsource jobs to the Zippies in a competitive global economy?

But when it comes to spiritual things, many Zippies are living on bread and water—just like many "multi-tasking" Americans. Shift times change frequently. Pressure mounts. Competition stalks.

"They make themselves so busy that there is no time," says Allen, who is a Christian. "You go to work and after that shopping, and after shopping you get ready for tomor-

row's presentation. It's so packed that you don't have time to think about someone up above taking care of you. They believe in 'Me alone. I don't need anybody's help.'"

Even all-important family ties are fraying. The challenges and temptations of city life can be overwhelming, particularly for someone from a village family experiencing freedom and disposable income for the first time. Young men start looking for thrills. Young women trade modest saris for tight jeans.

"It's so difficult," says Rachel, a Christian who recently graduated from college in Mumbai (formerly Bombay). "Drugs, sex, it's all over. Going to parties and discos. They say, 'C'mon, you can do it. Your parents aren't going to know.' You have to do it or you'll be out of the group."

For a generation leaping from rigid Hindu tradition to moral chaos, there's only one answer, according to Rachel: "The Lord is my God. He's the only one. I just know that the answer is Jesus."

Getting that message to India's up-and-comers ought to be a priority for Christians with a heart for this vast nation. By Outlook's estimate, six out of every 10 Indian households have at least one Zippie.



ZIPPIES India's young adult "Zippies" are the first generation in their country to benefit from economic globalization. But the challenges and temptations of city life can be overwhelming for a village kid experiencing freedom and disposable income for the first time. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)



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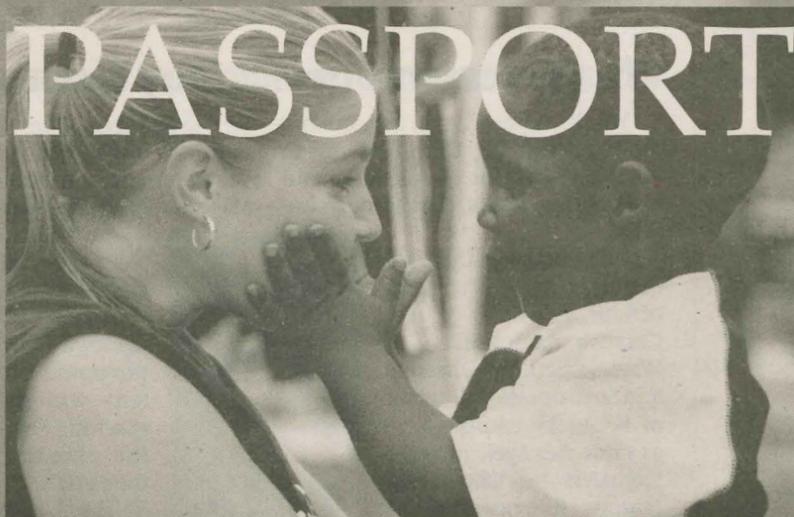
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Worthy gifts

Remember, it's not the gift's size that matters to God

The feature article in the Nov. 29 issue of BusinessWeek was about philanthropy in 2004. The section titled, "The Greatest Gifts of All" caught my attention. It reported on the \$2.5 billion Warren Buffett's late wife, Susie, left to their foundation.

The Buffetts have been famous for two things. First, they amassed the second largest fortune in U.S. history, because Warren has been one of the most talented investors the world has ever known. Second, they have demonstrated an aversion to spending any of their \$41 billion

on anything but necessities, including decisions not to provide their children with fortunes of their own, not collecting lots of "things," and not giving large amounts to worthy causes. According to the article, the Buffetts reflect a supreme paradox. Although they will have been among America's greatest misers in life, they likely will become among America's greatest philanthropists in death.

The article also included the giving records of the 50 most

generous philanthropists, including the \$3 billion Bill and Melinda Gates gave to their foundation, which was one of the largest in history by living donors.

The article prompted me to give thanks to God for the generosity of these mega-givers and for all of the good their generosity will accomplish throughout the world. It also prompted me to read again about the incident in Jesus' ministry reported in Mark 12:41-44, referred to as "the widow's offering." In terms of the coins she used, she made the smallest gift, but to Jesus she made the most worthy gift.

It is important for you and me to understand the truths of that experience. To God, the gift that counts is the gift that costs; it's not the amount, but the proportion; it's not the size of the gift, but the size of the sacrifice that really matters. In this season of giving, remember, no one is excluded from making a worthy gift to our Lord.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; (888) 254-5701; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Janet W. Adkins

Across

- 1 Great amount
- 5 Lea denizen
- 8 "All ____ that we should be saved was ... taken away" (Acts 27:20)
- 12 Son of Joah (1 Chronicles 6:21)
- 13 Gold, in Guatemala
- 14 Grandson of Adam
- 15 "Neither count I my life ____ unto myself" (Acts 20:24)
- 16 Bled, as fabric
- 17 Used to be
- 18 Usually 15 percent
- 20 To ____ for
- 22 Father of Rachel, and his namesakes
- 25 Cause great anger
- 29 Author of Tristram Shandy
- 30 911 happy ending
- 31 Naval officer (abbr.)
- 32 Laughing syllable
- 33 "Make a great flame with smoke ____ out of the city" (2 words, Judges 20:38)
- 37 Belonging to the first son of Eliphaz (Genesis 36:11)
- 41 "We who are Jews by ____" (Galatians 2:15)
- 42 "____ Abana and Pharpar ... better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings 5:12)
- 43 Number of performances of a play
- 44 Day ____
- 45 Get out of
- 48 Former Mideast republic (abbr.)

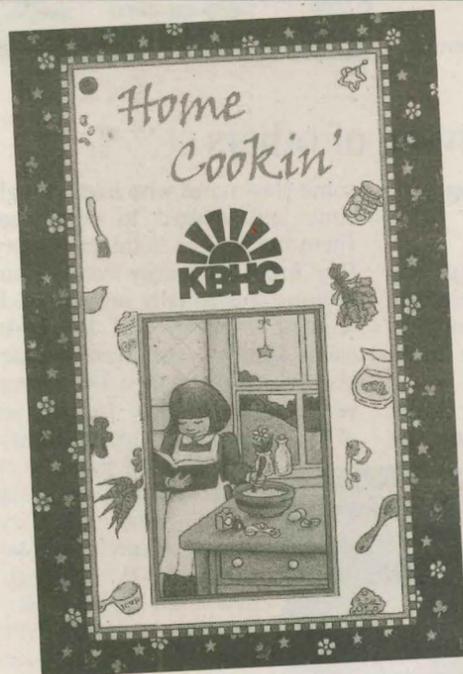
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12					13				14				
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			18	19			20	21					
22	23	24					25			26	27	28	
29							30						
		31									32		
33			34	35	36		37	38	39			40	
41								42					
				43				44					
45	46	47				48	49			50	51	52	53
54						55				56			
57						58				59			

- 50 Feminine name
- 54 "When ye ____ the harvest of your land" (Leviticus 23:22)
- 55 Hwy.
- 56 She was called "tender eyed"
- 57 Feminine name
- 58 Still
- 59 Writer Bombeck
- 21 Chemical suffix
- 22 Place of the seal (abbr.)
- 23 Entrance court (pl.)
- 24 Untamed one
- 26 Son of Carmi who was stoned by all of Israel (Joshua 7)
- 27 Fertilizer from sea birds
- 28 Shoe width
- 33 Hosp. employee
- 34 Continent which includes Italia
- 35 S.A. country
- 36 "But the talk of the lips tendeth only to ____" (Proverbs 14:23)
- 37 Musical instrument of the Old Testament (Isaiah 5)
- 38 Rather than
- 39 "____ not with him that flattereth with his lips" (Proverbs 20:19)
- 40 Elm, for one (abbr.)
- 45 Eastern state university
- 46 Uncle of Saul (1 Samuel 14)
- 47 Plug up
- 49 Consumed
- 51 Poetic preposition
- 52 Candidate for a burnt offering
- 53 Exclamation

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
S	U	S	A	C	R	A	B	R	U	N		
S	P	E	D	Z	O	B	A	O	N	E		
E	S	A	U	A	B	E	L	A	A	R	O	N
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32		
A	M	I	T	Y	S	A	X					
J	E	R	S	A	L	E	M	M	I	O		
A	D	A	M	B	I	T	B	O	T	H		
R	E	N	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	
C	H	U	R	N	S	A	S	H				
H	A	G	D	E	E	P	A	C	T	S		
I	L	L	L	O	N	E	N	O	A	H		
P	L	Y	E	N	D	S	Y	O	R	E		

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Evangelical scholars look to refine statement on inerrancy

San Antonio (RNS)—A group of evangelical scholars has taken the first step to more clearly state its support of biblical inerrancy, the belief that the Bible is without error.

Members of the Evangelical Theological Society, who gathered for their annual meeting Nov. 17-19 in San Antonio, adopted a resolution that further explains the group's two-sentence "doctrinal basis" that declares the Bible is inerrant.

"The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture's testimony to itself," reads the resolution, which was approved by a 4-to-1 margin.

"A proper understanding of inerrancy takes into account the language, genres and intent of Scripture. We reject approaches to Scripture that deny that biblical truth claims are grounded in reality."

It also states that members should refer to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, created in 1978, as a further explanation of the group's stance.

James Borland, secretary-treasurer of the society, said the resolution will be discussed over the next year and is likely to be considered at the group's 2005 meeting as a change to the organization's bylaws.

"Some wondered what our original statement meant because it was so brief and so this was to help clarify that," he told Religion News Service.

The action followed a meeting last year in which two scholars were almost ousted as members after declaring their support of open theism—the belief that God can "change His mind" depending on the actions of humans. Some society members thought the position of those scholars violated the group's commitment to inerrancy.

At the time of that vote, Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, had suggested that the society develop a definition of inerrancy. Mohler called the approval of the resolution a "good start" toward a hopeful future for the organization.

"The hesitation to define the term would leave the door open to persons who would define it into meaninglessness," he said. "We should be thankful that the society had the conviction and the courage and the eagerness, by such a margin, to approve this statement."

UCC's 'welcome' ad draws controversy

Washington (RNS)—A television ad by the United Church of Christ highlighting the denomination's acceptance of gay couples, has been rejected by at least two networks as "too controversial" and is raising objections from some Christian leaders.

The UCC's \$1.7 million "Still Speaking" ads debuted Dec. 1, the latest attempt by a mainline Protestant church to use television to increase visibility and build membership.

The 30-second spots feature beefy bouncers outside a church denying entry to various people, including a gay couple. Written text on the screen says, "Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we." A narrator says, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

NBC and CBS television networks both turned down the ad.

CBS, in a response provided by the UCC, said it refuses any issue ad that "touches on and/or takes a position on one side of a current controversial issue of public importance."

"Because this commercial touches on the exclusion of gay couples ... and the fact that the executive branch has recently proposed a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, this spot is unacceptable for broadcast on the (CBS and UPN) networks."

A rejection notice from NBC called the ads "too controversial." The ad has been accepted on several cable channels, including ABC Family, Black Entertainment Televi-



CONTROVERSIAL AD Bouncers in a new United Church of Christ television ad exclude various people, including a gay couple. The ad—designed to highlight the church's inclusiveness—was rejected by CBS and NBC, prompting criticism from groups supporting gay rights. (Photo courtesy of the United Church of Christ)

sion, Fox, TNT and TBS.

Church officials hoped the ads, scheduled to run through Christmas, would reach at least 60 percent of the U.S. population at least three times.

Robert Chase, director of communications for the Cleveland-based denomination, criticized the networks' decision.

"We find it disturbing that the networks in question seem to have no problem exploiting gay persons through mindless comedies or titillating dramas, but when it comes to a church's loving welcome of committed gay couples, that's where they draw the line."

Al Mohler, president of South-

ern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, called the ad "masterful propaganda" but "a diabolical misrepresentation of Christianity."

"Jesus Christ did indeed come to seek and to save the lost, but as He said to the woman caught in adultery, 'Go and sin no more,'" Mohler said on ABC's "Good Morning America." "He did not invite persons to stay in sinful lifestyles."



A trip to the big city

Student choir gets overnight visit in Louisville to perform at KBC meeting

Every four or five years, the boys and girls in the Oneida choir are invited to sing for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. While our choir is not nearly as large as the college choirs, we are just as proud of the efforts of our students. In a typical Sunday morning service, as the choir travels across Kentucky, attendance in churches ranges from as few as 50 people to as many as 300. Most of our students never have had the opportunity to sing for a group like those attending the KBC where there typically are more than 1,200 in attendance.

For the past three months, our choir has been practicing and memorizing their songs. During the last month the choir has sung for eight different congregations. The students knew that all of their work was preparing them for their KBC performance.

We normally take the choir from our campus to the convention on the day of their performance. This year needed to be a little different. Since the choir was scheduled to sing at 10 a.m., they would have had to leave our campus no later than 5 a.m. in order to make the trip to Louisville, change clothes and have a little practice time. Riding on a school bus so early in the morning for such a long trip is no pleasant experience. I decided that in order for the choir to be rested and able to do their best I would need to provide lodging in Louisville. Fortunately, the motel Kay and I were staying in had 10 extra rooms for our students.

They left campus around 5 p.m. and arrived in Louisville about 8:30. Needless to say, they were excited to be staying in a motel, especially one

that had a pool. I met the kids as they arrived and reminded them that many other guests were staying in the motel. They were reminded to be quiet and courteous. With only one or two minor exceptions, they were extremely well behaved. After an hour in the pool and a meeting to tell them about their schedule the next day, they went to their rooms. They had instructions to turn their lights and TVs off no later than midnight. So far as I know every student, 40 in all, followed my instructions.

We began waking up the students the next morning at 6 a.m. They were excited to eat breakfast in the lobby and proceed to the site of the convention. I was very concerned about arriving on time, since the 20-minute commute took them right down Interstate 64. While they did not experience any traffic delays, the next morning the same trip took me over an hour. Oh how I love living in the country!

The time came for their long-awaited performance. The director had selected three songs they especially enjoyed singing. While they are a relatively small group, I thought they did a great job. Many friends came to our display after the morning session and told us how much they enjoyed their songs. Two of the choir members also performed a five-minute skit in place of my report. According to many who came by, they did a marvelous job, too.

When it was time for them to leave the church, they returned to the motel to change clothes and then it was off to a buffet lunch before heading home. We had a wonderful time.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; www.oneidaschool.org; e-mail: president@oneidaschool.org



W.F. Underwood

Blessed by the giving of others

Campus families receive food, clothing and toys

In this season of giving, the Clear Creek family is certainly blessed. The Christmas Shopping Spree and Turkey Day are traditions unique to Clear Creek.

The Christmas Shopping Spree started 35 years ago under the leadership of former president's wife Kaye Aldridge. Churches, mission groups and individuals send us new merchandise or money to purchase gifts. These unwrapped gifts, for ages birth to 18, are tagged by value and displayed in the Family Life Center gymnasium. This year, each family received 25 tickets (\$125 exchange value) per dependent child, and on Nov. 29 they exchanged tickets for gifts in a festive shopping time.

From the cash received, each full-time degree-seeking student receives a gift card valued at approximately \$125. This will be higher if additional funds arrive before Dec. 6. Part-time students receive a gift card with half the value.

Turkey Day started in 1968 when 1966 alumnus Don Burnett brought a truckload of frozen turkeys to campus. He remembered

some classmates who had a tough time and wanted to encourage them during the holidays. Turkey Day funds primarily come from alumni and usually provide each student a turkey and \$50 cash; each faculty and staff worker also receives a turkey. For several years, 1978 graduate Don Colyer of Kingsport, Tenn., has brought a truckload of potatoes to distribute on Turkey Day.

On Nov. 13, First Baptist Church of Matthews, N.C., brought new coats and blankets. On Nov. 20, Russellville (Tenn.) Baptist and Holt's Baptist in Morristown, Tenn., brought a tractor-trailer load of used clothing, new toys and 50 food boxes. On Nov.

22, Rosemont Baptist Church in Lexington gave food boxes for 62 students. The church deacons have coordinated this project for over a decade. Shoe-Inn Family Footwear in London (owned by Swiss Colony pastor Johnny Jervis) sent 151 pairs of new shoes.

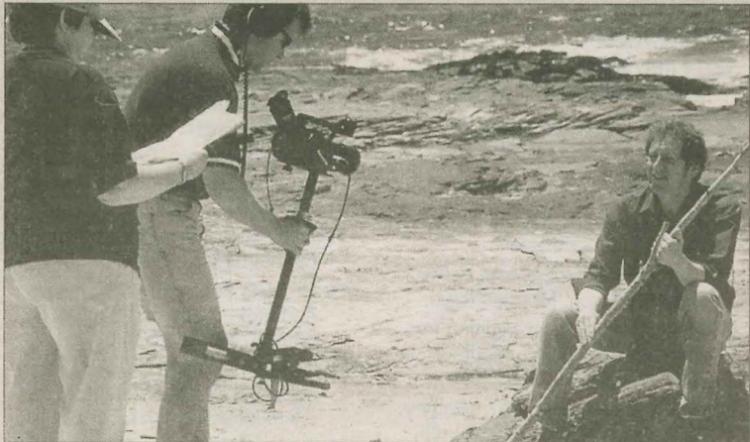
Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Pray that we who have received so much will not miss the blessing of giving.

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977; (606) 337-3196



Bill Whittaker

Fired up



FUEL FOR TEENS Music artist Randy Stonehill, on location at California's Crystal Cove State Park, tapes a teen-focused lesson for "Fuel: Igniting a New Life with God's Story." (LifeWay photo)

'Fuel' materials seek to fan flames for youth discipleship

By Brooklyn Noel
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

Nashville (BP)—Whether playing games, flipping channels or watching a DVD, teens gladly stare at a TV screen.

Jim Johnston notices this when his teenage son and his son's friends congregate in his family's bonus room.

"Teenagers are so media-oriented," said Johnston, interim marketing director in the church resources division at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. "The best way to bring them into God's Word is by using all the technological tools we've been given."

So, LifeWay created "Fuel: Igniting a New Life with God's Story." Fuel is a digital Bible study aimed at seventh- through 12th-graders, designed to be a "rockin', edgy, life-changing experience," Johnston said.

Nielsen Media Research reports that teens watched an average of three hours and seven minutes of television each day in 2003. Also in 2003, the Motion Picture Association of America's Worldwide Market Research found that 12- to 17-year-olds accounted for 18 percent of movie theater admissions.

Fuel uses contemporary Christian music, state-of-the-art graphics and video segments that include average teens in candid interviews about the topics featured in each session. Each lesson also includes an experienced youth leader who communicates the Bible story at the heart of each session.

"When we asked student ministry leaders, we found out that more than 80 percent of them wanted some kind of video component to use for Bible study," Johnston wrote in an article on the Fuel Web site. "That said one thing to me—these leaders knew their teenagers inside and out."

The first volume of the study premiered in July, and more than 1,000 churches purchased Fuel during its first two months of release.

"My students actually asked

for more," said Adam York, youth minister of First Baptist Church in Jamestown, Tenn.

York showed his youth group the promotional first segment of Fuel that tells the story of Noah's flood and features a segment with a skateboarding theme.

Johnston admitted that youth ministers and leaders may not be comfortable or accustomed to the music and video used in Fuel, but it was all designed with teenagers—not their older leaders—in mind.

"We're trying to make sure and reach the kids that are a little different," Johnston explained. "There are segments about skateboarding and other things that students are into. We wanted to make sure we appealed to the teenagers."

Each volume of Fuel includes 12 sessions presented on two DVDs and three CD-ROMs. Each session has three parts:

■ "The Spark" is designed to capture the students' attention using themes such as skateboarding and prepare them for the more in-depth material to come.

■ "Fanning the Flame" features straightforward interviews with teens who have a variety of opinions and backgrounds.

■ "Combustion," the meat of each session, draws on the skills of an experienced youth leader to present the Bible story.

"The videos relate to what they're doing now, but it's not cheesy," York said. "The Combustion part presents it in a way that makes you want to hear more."

Through eight volumes of the study, students will have the opportunity to hear the complete Bible in 96 stories during the course of two years.

The second volume is scheduled for release this month, and the other volumes will follow every three months through July 2006.

"It's stuff similar to MTV, but it presents the Word," York said.

To view sample materials, request a promo DVD and learn more about Fuel, visit www.lifeway.com/Fuel.

How to Be Good in a World Gone Bad. James Spiegel. Kregel Publications, 2004. 223 pages, \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦

James Spiegel defines a virtuous person as one who is morally excellent and who exhibits certain character traits that humans were designed to display. But as the author looks around the world he sees a decline in the value placed on being virtuous.

He writes this book to encourage Christians to make re-establishment of virtues a central task for the church and individuals.

Spiegel suggests more than 20 virtues a Christian should nurture. The nurturing begins with repeated actions, which develop into habits, which then turn into personal characteristics.

Most chapters are devoted to one virtue. Each virtue receives not only a discussion, which sometimes includes historical and religious background, but also practical ways the virtue can be developed.

Spiegel concludes by discussing the greatest virtue: love. Spiegel shows how love, as defined by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, defines many other moral virtues. Love, then, is the virtue of virtues.

The author makes a good case for a really good life being one that is lived virtuously. He also offers the encouragement that one is not left alone in trying to live a good life. Christ already has walked this path, and through His Spirit, which lives in us, we may capture what we were designed to be, regardless of what the rest of the world is like. *Wayne Hager*

Epic: The Story God Is Telling and the Role that Is Yours to Play. John Eldredge. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004. 104 pages, \$9.99. ♦♦♦♦

John Eldredge has written several books over the last few years that speak directly to men, specifically "Wild at Heart" and "Waking the Dead."

"Epic" addresses the story of mankind and how that story also applies to everyone today. The story involves evil versus good and how it all came about.

The chapters in this short read are listed as acts in a major play. The acts, including "Entrance of Evil" and "The Battle for the Heart" bring the reader into the pages rather quickly.

Eldredge notes, "Our stories tell us who we are, why we are here and what we are to do."

Because everyone has a story to tell and to live, why do most people feel that their story is one that they entered into 45 minutes late? If their story were a movie, what's the point?

The point of every person's story, Eldredge contends, is that it is designed to be relational with the author of all life, God Himself.

Eldredge uses stories, including "Gladiator" and "Braveheart"

to show how everyone is moving closer to a climax in his or her own particular story.

This book speaks to all age groups and both genders. Youth can enjoy the book, as it is a quick read and can get them to think about their story early in life. Men who have read other Eldredge books will quickly recognize the style and stories he has used in other books. Women will enjoy the book as it relates to themselves as well as children and husbands.

Pastors can use this book as a counseling aid or for sermon illustrations on such subjects as love, loss, pain, divorce, evil, war, angels and other topics. *Steve Coleman*

House Church Manual. William Tenny-Brittian. Chalice Press, 2004. 113 pages, \$23.99. ♦♦♦

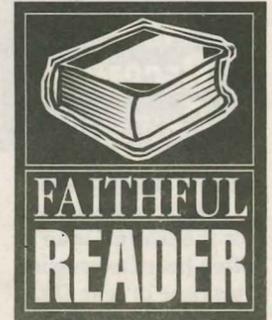
Writing in the preface to "House Church Manual," Bill Easum asserts, "The twenty-first century is ripe for a rapid spread of a house church network."

He enumerates four reasons for his conviction: The house church is the only New Testament model alive today; our anti-institutional world rejects the traditional church as "plastic, uncaring and unauthentic;" the emerging generation prefers small, relational gatherings; and our secular culture is rapidly marginalizing Christianity. Easum commends William Tenny-Brittian's model of the house church and the House Church Network as a means to increasing intimacy, involvement and commitment.

As much as I was tempted to want to stop and quibble with some of Easum and Tenny-Brittian's conclusions, and seeming overstatement (e.g. that the house church is the only New Testament model), I decided to press on and see what Tenny-Brittian was developing. I expected to read about a small, informal and intimate model of church.

What I found was a well-developed, fairly complex model that included not only instructions on how to conduct individual house churches, but direction in forming a network of house churches. In some way, his description of the House Church Network sounded like the Baptist associational model, just on a smaller scale.

Tenny-Brittian's manual demonstrates that the house church movement is not about gathering a small group of people in one's home for worship and prayer. House churches are intended to be centers of worship, evangelism, relationship building, discipleship and service. The manual outlines how individual house churches can fulfill these five purposes of the church. Even if one never intends to start a house church, the suggestions for evangelism, discipling and missions could be used by the traditional church. *Jim Holladay*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@trifluent.net; lyndonpastor@aol.com; risen4me@hotmail.com

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Anna Mary Byrdwell
"Jesus is the reason for the season" is an often-heard expression this time of year. Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?

We resemble sheep that are lost, but God provided His Son to "stand in" for us and take the punishment we deserve (Isaiah 53:6, John 3:16). Jesus asks us to confess our sins (Matthew 10:32-33). We must acknowledge that we are sorry for the wrong things we do (repent) and that we need forgiveness (Luke 13:3).

In "Polar Express," only those who "believed in Santa" could hear the Christmas bell ring. In life, only those who believe that Jesus is God's Son and His free gift to us will experience the freedom from guilt, freedom from the fear of death, and the exhilarating joy and happiness that only He gives.

With the joy of forgiveness, we have the desire to obey God in our daily lives (John 14:23-24). Our love for Him motivates us to be Christ-like in our actions and in our treatment of others. We are no longer controlled by sin. We find joy in sharing His love with others and helping them find the same joy we have.

If you are missing this joy in your life, read the Bible passages mentioned above. Notice that the process is not complicated: Repent, believe, confess and obey.

I memorized these scriptures more than 55 years ago as a 9-year-old in Junior Girl's Auxiliary. When, as a teenager, I realized I needed Christ in my life, these memorized scriptures came alive and the joy of salvation was mine.

Anna Mary Byrdwell will retire this month as Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union's general WMU consultant after 37 years of service

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Correction: Bardstown Church's choir will present "Living Nativity" Dec. 19-22, 6-8 p.m. **David Stokes** is pastor.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church will present the Christmas program, "All Is Well" Dec. 12, 7 p.m. **Mark Hopper** is pastor.

■ **CALIFORNIA**—First Twelve Mile Church ordained **Troy Richardson** as a deacon Nov. 21. **Cohen Copley** is pastor.

■ **COVINGTON**—Decoursey Church will erect a "Unity Cross" holiday display Dec. 11, 11 a.m., at Fountain Square in Cincinnati. The cross, designed to promote racial and religious harmony and unity, will remain on display through Dec. 20. **Ashley Beagle** is pastor.

Latonia Church's sanctuary choir will present the Christmas program, "Bethlehem Morning" Dec. 19, 6 p.m. **Stephen Hollaway** is pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church's music ministry will present the Living Christmas Tree, "The Story of the Trees" Dec. 11, 7 p.m., and Dec. 12, 3:30 and 7 p.m. **Troy Dobbs** is pastor.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church will present its Living Christmas Tree Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 11, 5 and 7:30 p.m. **Dan Francis** is pastor.

■ **FORT MITCHELL**—Fort Mitchell Church will present a "Morning of Christmas Music" Dec. 19. **Harold Pike** is interim pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will present the Christmas cantata, "One Incredible Moment" Dec. 12, 6 p.m. **Wallace Kent** is pastor.

First Church will present the cantata, "The Voices of Christmas" Dec. 12, 10:50 a.m. **David Hinson** is pastor.

■ **FRANKLIN**—First Church's adult choir and dramatists will present "Agnus Dei" Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. **Bob Sutton** is pastor.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church recently called **Jimmy Jasper** as minister of youth and activities. **Rodney Travis** is pastor.

■ **JEFFERSONTOWN**—Lakeside Church will host a building dedication service and open house Dec. 12, 3 p.m. The church will host its annual musical "Christmas Celebration"

Dec. 19, 6 p.m. For more information, call (502) 267-4446. **Wes Brockway** is pastor.

■ **LONDON**—Hart Church recently called **Gary Messer** as minister of pastoral care. **Jeff Jackson** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Broadway Church will host the Louisville Orchestra Dec. 7, 8 p.m. For more information, contact roger@broadwaybaptist.org or call the church office at (502) 895-2459. **Chris Caldwell** is pastor.

■ **MT. WASHINGTON**—First Church will present "The Majesty of Christmas" Dec. 11-13, 7 p.m., and Dec. 12, 3 p.m. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

Kings Church's adult choir will present "A Christmas Gathering" Dec. 12, 7 p.m., and the children's choir will present the musical, "Fear Not Factor" Dec. 19, 7 p.m. **Corey Abney** is pastor.

■ **MUNFORDVILLE**—Lynn Association has called **Gordon McDowell**, pastor of Three Forks Bacon Creek Church in Magnolia, as director of missions effective Jan. 1. He succeeds **Lonnie Sheets** who will retire Dec. 31 after 17 years as director of missions.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Lewis Lane Church will present "The Promise of a King" Dec. 12, 6 p.m. **Greg Huguley** is pastor.

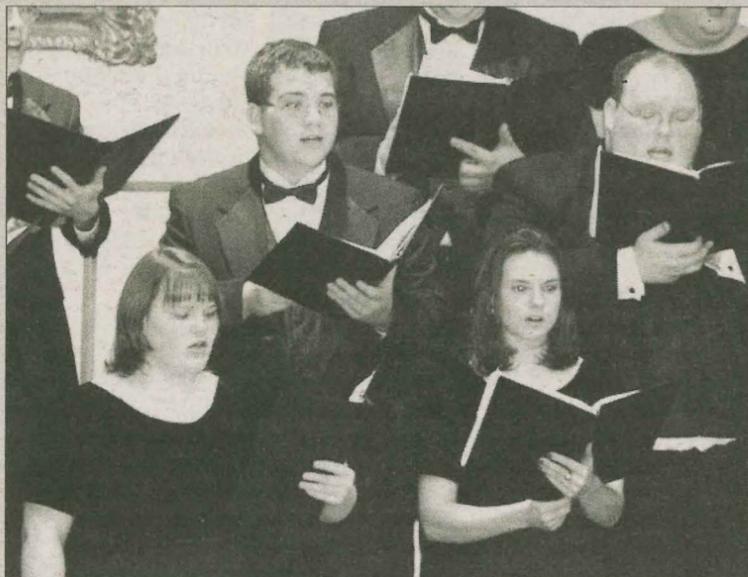
■ **VERSAILLES**—**Scott Burns** resigned as youth minister at New Hope Church to become associate/teaching pastor at Alliance Bible Fellowship in Boone, N.C., effective Nov. 1. New Hope Church recently ordained **Brett Butler**, **Mike Drawbaugh**, **Gene McAdams** and **Kelly Raybourne** as deacons. **Wesley Noss** is pastor.

Versailles Church's sanctuary choir and orchestra will present "A Christmas Celebration" Dec. 11 and 12, 7 p.m. **John Brandon** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church will present "One Incredible Moment" Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. **Steve Rice** is pastor.

What's going on?

Mail your happenings to Mountains to the Mississippi at Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: wesrec@earthlink.net.



'TIS THE SEASON Cumberland College ushered in the Christmas season Nov. 29 on its Williamsburg campus with the school's annual "Hanging of the Green" service. The Cumberland College Chorale sang several popular Christmas tunes, including "Joyful and Triumphant." Other musical performances included pieces by the handbell ensemble, youth chorale and Cumberland Singers.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

13-14 KBC Mission Board meeting, Baptist Building, Middletown.

24-31 KBC Christmas Holidays, Baptist Building closed.

January

13-15 Shepherding the Shepherd Conference, Lexington.

25 Pastors' Forum, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

27-28 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Maple Grove Baptist Church, Louisville.

28-29 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Trinity Baptist Church, Lexington.

February

4-5 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Cave City Convention Center.

4-5 Great Commission Prayer Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

15 Regional Annuity Conference, Baptist Building, Middletown.

15 Regional Annuity Conference, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

17 Regional Annuity Conference, Broadway Baptist Church, Lexington.

17 Regional Annuity Conference, First Baptist Church, Hazard.

19 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

26 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

26 Regional Keyboard Festival, First Baptist Church, Murray.

26 Regional Keyboard Festival, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

28-March 1 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Valley View Baptist Church, Louisville.

For more information, call (888) 266-6477 or visit www.kybaptist.org

Campbellsville names football coach

Campbellsville—Jim Deaton, former director of athletics at Campbellsville University, will return to Campbellsville as head football coach.

Deaton succeeds Mark Peach who resigned after two years as head coach. The Campbellsville Tigers were 6-5 this season, finishing fifth in the Mid-South Conference.

Deaton served 24 seasons as an assistant football coach at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City,

Tenn. He was part of five NAIA national championship teams during that time.

Campbellsville President Michael Carter described Deaton as "a man of strong Christian faith" who "will set the example expected by all who know Tiger football."

A graduate of Carson-Newman College, Deaton served as a high school coach in Virginia and Tennessee before returning to coach at his alma mater.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Church pews. Beautiful, high-quality hardwood pews (one 14-foot; one 20-foot; some 9-foot). Excellent condition. For more information, please call (859) 635-5725.

FOR SALE: Premium canvas art work depicting high-impact nature scenes coupled with inspirational Scripture verses—great for gifts, home and church decorations. www.oceanalmimages.com.

FOR SALE: Religious books (thousands). Send e-mail for list: dudley@dam.net. Evangelist Bill Dudley, 1116 Lacy Drive, Lebanon, MO 65536. (417) 532-2665.

SEEKING: Part-time pastor for Pine Knot Southern Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Search Committee, PO Box 327, Pine Knot, KY 42635, or contact Leland Ross, (606) 376-9027.

SEEKING: Minister to children: Christ-centered church in the heart of Kentucky is looking for an energetic, creative, committed minister to work with our children and their families (nursery to 6th grade). This is a well-established ministry including missions programs, music programs, VBS and Sunday morning and evening children's programs. Must be able to train and recruit volunteers for this ministry. Training in child and family development and a bachelor's degree preferred for this three-quarter-time position. Please send resumé and all information to Maria Medley, Campbellsville Baptist Church, 420 North Central Avenue, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister (paid position; grades 6-12) for Mexico Baptist Church in rural western Kentucky. Also seeking a part-time music minister. Average Sunday school attendance: 135. Send resumé to MBC Youth Council, 175 Mexico Road, Marion, KY 42064, Attn: Brent Highfil, or call (270) 965-2149. turnerchandler@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Strong Southern Baptist church accepting resumé for middle school minister. Must have a minimum of three years experience in youth work. Must possess a master's degree in a field of religion from an accredited seminary or university. Resumé must be received by Dec. 15, 2004, to be considered for the position. Please send a resumé and salary history to: Middle School Search Committee, 2412 Chris Drive, Clarksville, TN 37043.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor with ministry focus on students and recreation for a vibrant First Baptist church in Southeastern Kentucky. Seminary training and youth ministry experience preferred. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, 201 North Main St., Barbourville, KY 40906, or e-mail to chsec@barbourville.com.

TOUR: Dr. Anis Shorosh welcomes you on his 39th Holy Land & Greece tour, Dec. 27, 2004-Jan. 5, 2005. \$1,999 from N.Y. to N.Y. Receive a free brochure by writing PO Box 949, Fairhope, AL 36533, or phone (251) 680-7770.

Census: Adults marrying later but are happier

Washington (ABP)—New data from the U.S. Census Bureau confirms young adults are waiting longer to get married. The result, however, might be healthier marriages.

Since 1970, the average age at which men marry for the first time rose from 25.3 years to 27.1, according to the bureau's Current Population Survey. The average marrying age for women rose from 20.8 to 23.2.

Also, the percentage of men age 30-34 who have never married has quadrupled since 1970, now accounting for about a third of men in the age group. About a fourth of women age 30-34 have never married, which also is a fourfold increase from the 6 percent of 1970.

Sociologists who viewed the report said young adults are focusing more on their education and jobs than marriage. An increase in cohabitation also is contributing to the postponement of marriage, they said.

Two researchers who direct the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University see some encouraging signs in the trends, however. "There is a common belief that, although a smaller percentage of Americans are now marrying than was the case a few decades ago, those who marry have marriages of higher quality," said David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead.

"It seems reasonable that if divorce removes poor marriages from the pool of married couples and cohabitation 'trial marriages' deter some bad marriages from forming, the remaining marriages on average should be happier," the pair wrote in the 2004 study "The State of Our Unions."

Popenoe and Whitehead, who studied attitudes about marriage among young men age 25-34, found that 80 percent of men view marriage favorably and are good candidates for matrimony. "The men who are the best 'marriage bets' are those who are more traditional in their family and religious background characteristics and in their attitudes toward marriage," the researchers said.

Their research showed that the prime time for men to search for and marry their "soul mate" occurs roughly between ages 25 and 30, and that the meaning of marriage has changed for those men.

"Compared to earlier generations of men, young men today are less likely to equate marriage with becoming an adult," the researchers said. Neither do they view marriage primarily as a means to have children. Instead, the researchers said, young men tend to marry in order to build a life with their "soul mates."

Noel & no shopping

'Street preacher' recruiting disciples against Christmas commercialism

By Jason Anthony
Religion News Service

New York (RNS)—The holidays bring anticipated changes to Manhattan. They light the tree at Rockefeller Center. The Rockettes put on reindeer horns at Radio City. And the Reverend Billy gets thrown in jail.

"We pick him up every year," said officer Daniel Nestor as the door of the NYPD police van closed on a red-faced man in a white clerical collar. "Day after Thanksgiving."

The Reverend Billy is not really a man of God—not in the conventional sense. But it is not true to say he is just a performer, either. Reverend Billy is the evangelical alter ego of Bill Talen, a New York performance artist who has spent seven years traveling the world, terrorizing demons at Starbucks and preaching against chain stores and the love of retail.

"I pray to God-Who-Is-Not-A-Product," he says. Talen calls his ministry "the Church of Stop Shopping" and his pulpit is the retail floor. His performances are funny, in-your-face and often rowdy enough to land him in jail.

But Reverend Billy is serious about his crusade against the evils of consumerism, materialism and consumption. He performs year-round, but returns to New York City for "Buy Nothing Day," an offbeat holiday in its eighth year that encourages people to stay home on the day after Thanksgiving, one of the busiest shopping days of the year.

"This man is not Jesus"

In the early afternoon of this year's big day, he stood on the median strip of Times Square, in front of a group of about 30 supporters and curious tourists. Neon advertisements surrounded him in the arguable ground zero of American retail. Talen led the crowd into local stores, cutting a tall figure in a white suit with a matching megaphone.

In front of Virgin Megastore, he pointed to a larger-than-life cutout of Virgin founder Richard Branson, the star of the reality series "The Rebel Billionaire." The Branson cutout is sky diving, seemingly floating in midair, smiling, his arms outspread toward the street. "This man is not Jesus," thundered Reverend Billy.



STREET REVIVAL Talen works himself and his audience into a frenzy outside a McDonald's in Times Square. He opposes consumerism and says he prays to 'God-Who-Is-Not-A-Product.'



HOLIDAYS IN HANDCUFFS Bill Talen, is hauled away by New York City police officers after he tried to cast demons out of a Starbucks cash register.

Billy let his gaze travel up to neon billboards for Mountain Dew and Liz Claiborne.

"They keep us looking up instead of at each other," he said. "Can I hear an 'amen?'"

Though he now travels to perform and lecture against consumer culture around the world, Times Square holds a special significance for Talen. Reverend Billy was born here, inspired by the area's street preachers back in the seedy days when it needed a different kind of salvation, from drug pushers and prostitutes.

Now Reverend Billy rails against different sins, the sins of supporting child labor in the Third World or destroying the environment. His invective is poisonous. Sometimes it's hard to know how seriously Talen takes his performances.

"Bill was brought up a pretty strict Calvinist," said Jim Napolitano, a friend of Talen's in the crowd. "I think he's finding some of that religious fervor. It's very sincere. That much is not an act."

Times Square still attracts evangelists. As Talen held forth in front of Virgin, a group from the First Baptist Church of Fairfield, Texas,

preached the word in front of Toys R Us two blocks away. There were hundreds of children screaming for toys in dozens of languages. But in the shopping frenzy, Jim Sneed from Fairfield handed out tracts and opened a Bible to point out the real story of Christmas.

"There's the reason for Christmas right there," he said. "Luke 2."

Broad appeal for message

Aiden Enns, who worked for Ad-busters, the organization that started Buy Nothing Day, says Reverend Billy's message "appeals to left-wingers and to right-wing folks who find the heart of loyalty to their church is being edged out by consumerism."

Enns is a fan of Reverend Billy. In March he commissioned his own Buy Nothing performance in Winnipeg, Manitoba, a play to celebrate a Buy Nothing Christmas movement he had created with some Mennonite friends. He soon found that some of his biggest supporters were local churches.

Enns is just one of many inspired by Reverend Billy.

The thousands of shoppers in Times Square have become Reverend Billy's audience. This year, he led his flock to 47th and Broadway for the day's swan song. He grabbed some passersby and prayed with them, quietly and intensely, before heading into the Starbucks while cops waited by the door.

The crime that tipped the scale this holiday season was the same one that landed him in the Los Angeles County Jail over the summer: trying to cast out the demons of a Starbucks cash register.

"I try to keep him in the realm of civil disobedience," said his wife, Savitri Durkee, as the doors closed and the police van drove off with Talen inside.

Durkee called the airlines to change plane tickets to London, where Reverend Billy had been scheduled to appear the next day for London's Buy Nothing Parade.

"We'll try to go tomorrow," she said.

DON'T DECK THE MALLS

Bill Talen, known as Reverend Billy, amplifies his anti-shopping message to a Times Square crowd in New York City. (RNS photos by Jason Anthony)

